

Private Members' Business

Today, they tell us they will close part of a rail line in the Chibougamau region. Of course that line is not being used at the moment. There is a recession, our mines are closed, our miners are unemployed and they are cutting their benefits so these people will now have to resort to welfare. They are closing the doors to the future for these people; they tell them their railroad is worthless, it is not profitable it will be closed and that they will make \$5 million by selling the metal. It is the answer of a scrap dealer.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Caron: It is not the answer of someone interested in regional development.

Last Wednesday I took part in a symposium organized in Chicoutimi by people who want to plan their regional development. They want to draw up a strategic development plan for their area. Today, they will be told to forget about including Chibougamau—Chapais in their plan because there are people in the Department of Transport and at the CN who say that if the rail line is not profitable, it must be closed. At this rate, all the roads to Saguenay—Lac—Saint—Jean are going to be closed. What highway pays for itself? What is the government's duty?

The duty of the government is to provide services, it is not to calculate their cost—effectiveness to the penny. Is the Jonquière Hospital cost effective? Of course not. Is the CEGEP in Jonquière cost effective? People will say that we spend millions of dollars, we train people and some of these young people are unemployed, because of the economic policies of past and present governments. It is not profitable, so close it down. At that rate, let us close Canada down. Is Canada profitable? Canada is running a \$40-billion deficit, so close Canada down.

That is why I support the previous speaker's thinking, not on shutting down Canada, but on closing down railways in outlying regions. They are extremely important, they are our arteries, our lifeblood, our economic development depends on them. If we start closing them, we will be paralysed. That is how paralysis occurs in the human body; blood stops circulating. If you close our railways and our highways, if you do not give us the infrastructure we need to develop, we will be paralysed and die.

I am pleased to support the motion of my colleague from Roberval and I am sure that hon. members will support it too.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, the speech of the opposition House leader was so interesting that I felt I had to add a few words.

The hon. member forgot something. I remember quite well that during a by election in the Lac—Saint—Jean region a few years ago, the Conservative government spent \$143 million to help elect the present opposition leader as member for Lac—Saint—Jean. Why did the hon. member not ask him to be generous with this project, to be its benefactor in return for all the money that was spent?

[English]

Really the money was spent. They should have named this project as one of the things they spent the money on instead of spending it on all of the other projects.

The hon. member knows his leader got this money to get him elected into this House. They spent \$143 million on one byelection in one riding. It is an extraordinary confession when he comes to this House pleading for more money for his riding when all that money was spent in that area just to get his leader elected and he did not get him to do it.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), this item is dropped from the Order Paper.

[English]

It being 2.30 p.m. the House stands adjourned until Monday next at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2.30 p.m.)